

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An instrument system for preparing a disc space between adjacent vertebral bodies to receive a repair device, the instrument system comprising:
at least one distractor including a tapered body section for distracting the vertebral bodies in a manner that restores natural lordosis of the lumbar and cervical spines.
2. The instrument system according to claim 1, further comprising a vertebrae immobilizing template, the template constructed as a sleeve member that can be placed about the at least one distractor when the at least one distractor is inserted into the disc space, to fix the positions of the bodies.
3. The instrument system according to claim 2, wherein the sleeve member includes opposing prongs extending therefrom for fixing the positions of the vertebral bodies when the prongs are impacted into the bodies.
4. The instrument system according to claim 2, further comprising a reamer assembly including a reamer having a surface with cutting elements for cutting tissue from endplates of the vertebral bodies.

5. The instrument system according to claim 4, wherein the surface of the reamer defines a tapered profile, the cutting elements simultaneously cutting tissue from opposing endplates of the adjacent vertebral bodies.
6. The instrument system according to claim 4, wherein the reamer assembly further includes a reamer sleeve that operates as a stop to limit reamer travel depth into the disc space.
7. The instrument system according to claim 4, wherein the sleeve member of the template includes opposing prongs extending therefrom for fixing the positions of the vertebral bodies when the prongs are impacted into the bodies, the prongs being impacted such that a surface of the template approximately aligns with a surface of the distractor thereby locating the template so that when the reamer assembly is used to cut tissue from endplates of the vertebral bodies, the reamer of the reamer assembly is disposed at a fixed distance from where a posterior wall of the distractor was positioned within the disc space.
8. The instrument system according to claim 4, further comprising a handle including a coupling member for coupling the handle to the at least one distractor or the template, the handle being useable with the at least one distractor for distracting the disc space and being further useable for placing the template about the at least one distractor after it has been used to distract the vertebral bodies.

9. The instrument system according to claim 8, wherein the handle further includes an impaction member for impacting the template.
10. The instrument system according to claim 8, wherein the template includes at least one ball detent extending from a side surface of the sleeve member that cooperates with the coupling member of the handle to couple the handle to the template.
11. The instrument system according to claim 1, further comprising a handle including a coupling member that connects the handle to the at least one distractor, the handle being useable with the at least one distractor for distracting the vertebral bodies.
12. The instrument system according to claim 1, further comprising a reamer having a surface with cutting elements for cutting tissue from endplates of the vertebral bodies.
13. The instrument system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one distractor further includes a connector section opposite the body section, the connector section for coupling a handle to the at least one distractor.
14. The instrument system according to claim 13, wherein the connector section includes at least one ball detent for use in coupling the handle to the at least one distractor.

15. A distractor for use in a system that prepares a disc space between adjacent vertebral bodies to receive a repair device, the distractor comprising a tapered body section for distracting the vertebral bodies in a manner that restores natural lordosis of the lumbar and cervical spines.

16. The distractor according to claim 15, wherein the distractor further includes a connector section opposite the body section, the connector section for coupling a handle to the distractor.

17. The distractor according to claim 16, wherein the connector section includes a detent element for coupling the handle to the distractor.

18. A vertebrae immobilizing template for use in a system that prepares a disc space between adjacent vertebral bodies to receive a repair device, the template comprising a sleeve member for fixing the positions of the vertebral bodies, the sleeve member being placeable about a distractor inserted into the disc space.

19. The template according to claim 18, further comprising opposing prongs extending from the sleeve member for fixing the positions of the vertebral bodies when the prongs are impacted into the bodies.

20. The template according to claim 18, further comprising a detent element disposed in a side surface of the sleeve member for coupling a handle to the template.